

Atlanta campaign

The Atlanta campaign in the Civil War began on May 5, 1864, when Gen. William T. SHERMAN, with more than 100,000 Federal troops, advanced from Chattanooga, Tenn., against a Confederate force of some 65,000 under Gen. Joseph E. JOHNSTON. Sherman's advance was part of a coordinated Federal drive against the two main Confederate armies in the field in 1864; this drive by George G. Meade against Robert E. Lee and Sherman against Johnston was designed to end the war.

Johnston began one of the great retreats in history, parrying when he could, stalling everywhere, threatening on good ground, evading every trap, backing up with guns and men intact until, at last, he looked down on Sherman's legions from defenses atop Kennesaw Mountain, northwest of Atlanta. There Sherman was checked (June 27), but he flanked the Confederates and besieged Atlanta by the end of July 1864. Johnston was relieved of command on July 17. His replacement was Gen. John B. HOOD, whose more reckless tactics failed to halt Sherman's advance. Hood evacuated Atlanta during the night of August 31, and Sherman moved in the next day.

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Bibliography: Castel, Albert, *The Atlanta Campaign of 1864* (1992); Connelly, Thomas L., *Autumn of Glory* (1971); McCarley, J. B., et al., *The Atlanta Campaign* (1989).